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AUTHOR Bunch, Ralph
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to compare data on sample groups of Japanese, Japanese Americans, and Americans from three separate sources to determine political orientations and the socialization influencing the Japanese Americans' attitudes. The study ascertains whether the social-geographical environment or the family and other primary groups influence the orientations of Japanese Americans. Inquiry was limited to attitudes about majority rule and minority rights. Questions asked were: (1) what are the relative proportions of support for democratic precepts among Japanese, Japanese Americans, and other Americans; and (2) are the age/generation differences within these three groups similar in direction and extent. Although there are strong similarities in orientations, it was found that elder Japanese Americans are more like their cohorts in Japan than like Americans, but that younger Japanese Americans are more "American" than a cross section of non-Japanese Americans. Thus, it seems that cultural predispositions to political behavior are transferred through the family and other primary groups or socialization agents. Also, orientation discrepancies are due probably to generational differences rather than environment. (Author/ND)

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POLITICAL ORIENTATIONS:

COMPARING JAPANESE IN PORTLAND AND JAPAN

by

Ralph Bunch

Political Science Department

PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY

presented to

the 1975 Conference of the

ASIAN STUDIES ON THE PACIFIC COAST

EAST-WEST CENTER

University of Hawaii at Manoa - Honolulu, Hawaii

POLITICAL ORIENTATIONS: COMPARING JAPANESE IN PORTLAND AND JAPAN

Are the political orientations of Japanese Americans similar to the political orientations of their generational cohorts in Japan despite the geographical interruption in their relationship?[1] The methodological problems involved in such an inquiry are exceeded only by the potential utility of the results in building theory, especially in the area of political socialization. The historical homogeneity of Japanese society and its considerable isolation up to 1868 allow for an almost ideal quasi-controlled experimental situation rare in social sciences. Two groups with a common heritage evolve in different social environments over time, and the characteristics of their political orientations are ascertained. It is found that there are strong similarities in the orientations; the Japanese Americans are more like their generational cohorts in Japan than like other Americans. If so, it would be reasonable to hypothesize that cultural predispositions to political behavior have been transferred through certain agents of socialization, the family and other primary groups, in spite of the effect of other agents of socialization in the new environment. This would seem to indicate that at least some predispositions to political behavior would not need the re-enforcing effect of social institutions other than the family and primary groups. On the other hand, evidence of a gradual atrophying of such predispositions might indicate the limits of the effacacy of the family as a carrier of predispositions to political behavior.

The political socialization process as a subject of study is still an unmapped terrain with shifting concepts and conclusions. The role of the family

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[1] This paper is meant to be tentative and exploratory. The terms used are not highly operationalized; space and data limitations prohibit this. For a more precise treatment of the method and concepts presented here, see the author's "Orientational Profiles: A Method for Micro-Macro Analysis of Attitude", The Western Political Quarterly (December, 1971),,pp. 666-674.

in the process is assessed as paramount by some and not by others.[2] Yasumasa Kuroda concludes "that the family is not an important agency of political socialization" in Japan, at least as indicated by his empirical study of the political orientations of Japanese law students.[3] Likewise, Nobutaka Ike's study of generational change in values in Japan tends to accept the hypothesis that desire for Maruyama's "individuation" may be superceding the effect of the family in modern Japan in determining the value hierarchy and thus the political orientations of post-war generations.[4] But the pre-eminence of the family could be reasserted if it were found that Japanese Americans exhibit orientations similar to their cohorts in Japan, the implication being that in the absence of common supporting agents of socialization such as secondary groups, schools and other governmental institutions and symbols, the family would be left as the sole carrier of the orientational elements found to be similar. Other explanations might be just as plausible, however. The oft-quoted propensity for the young to be liberal, individualistic and idealistic and the old to be more conservative, more socially concerned and more cynical, an explanation more biological than cultural, is one; another is offered by Inglehart and rejected by Ike, that of a common post-industrial cross-cultural "social milieu".[5]

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[2] Generally, this is the position of the earlier students of political socialization beginning with Herbert Hyman (1959). See R. Dawson and K. Prewitt, Political Socialization (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, c1969), p. 105. Other studies dispute this. See R. Hess and J. Torney, The Development of Political Attitudes in Children (Garden City: Anchor Books, c1967), p. 109.

[3] Yasumasa Kuroda, "Agencies of Political Socialization and Political Change: Political Orientations of Japanese Law Students," Human Organization, Vol. 24, No. 4 (Winter, 1965-66), pp. 328-331.

[4] Nobutaka Ike, "Economic Growth and Intergenerational Change in Japan", APSR (December, 1973), pp. 1194-1203.

[5] Ibid.

Another attribute of the inquiry proposed here would be the advantage of holding constant such variables as race and religion and psychological variables such as enryo, make girai, "face" and patterns of obligation. So would the intervening variable of a response set which seems particularly to affect Japanese respondents to attitude surveys.[6] This leaves two major problems of such a study: (1) identifying and operationally defining the variables for comparison and (2) procurring the data. This study cannot obtain data adequate for a proper testing of the questions just stated, but proposes to compare available data on Japanese and Americans with the characteristics of Japanese Americans in the author's survey of 300 Japanese Americans in the metropolitan area of Portland, Oregon.[7] The possible utility of a later larger effort may be measured by the evaluation of the use of these few examples as a prototype.

Some boundary must be placed around the subject; inquiry will be limited here to attitudes about majority rule and minority rights, two basic elements of democratic theory. Specifically, answers to these two questions will be sought: (1) What are the relative proportions of support for democratic precepts among Japanese, Japanese Americans and other Americans? (2) Are the age/generation differences within these three groups similar in direction and extent?

Acceptance of Democratic Precepts

1. Individualism: Concern for the individual, his "rights" and his worth apart

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[6] R. Lazarus, M. Tomita, E. Opton, and M. Kodama, "A Cross-Cultural Study of Stress Reaction Patterns in Japan", Journal of Personality and Social Psychology (1966), Vol. 4, pp. 622-633.

[7] Ralph Bunch, Political Orientations of Japanese Americans (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Oregon, 1968).

from the collectivity has been a major precept in Western political thought for centuries. It has had considerably less attention in Japanese culture historically but is presently a matter of basic law. What is the relative commitment to individual rights in Japan, among Japanese Americans and among Americans generally and in regard to generational portions of these populations?

TABLE I: VALUING THE INDIVIDUAL OVER THE COLLECTIVITY AMONG JAPANESE, JAPANESE AMERICANS AND OTHER AMERICANS (In %)

	Japan[a]	Japanese Americans[b]	Other Americans[c]
Totals:	32.6	74.0	73.1
Generations:			
Young	42	94.1	84
Middle	34	83.5	69
Old	23	33.3	60
N=	3033	201	970

[a] Nobutaka Ike, "Economic Growth and Intergenerational Change in Japan", APSR (December, 1973), p. 1202. Percent agreeing that "In order to give recognition to one's rights, it may be necessary that the public interest be sacrificed sometimes." Data from 1968 national character survey.

[b] Ralph Bunch, Data from 1968 survey of 300 Japanese Americans in Portland, Oregon. Percent disagreeing that "The individual owes his first duty to the state and only secondarily to his personal welfare."

[c] Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, The Civic Culture. The Total comes from the marginals in the Codebook, Deck III, CC 11, and the generational breakdown from Donald J. Devine, The Political Culture of the United States (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1972), p. 270. Question is the same as in the Portland Survey.

Of considerably more use in terms of the objective of this investigation is the generational breakdown of the Japanese American data:

TABLE II: VALUING THE INDIVIDUAL OVER THE COLLECTIVITY AMONG JAPANESE AMERICANS

Sansei	94.1%	(N=34)
Nisei	91.3%	(N=92)
Kibei	41.1%	(N=17)
Issei	23.0%	(N=40)

The 33% for the Issei is similar to the 23% for the aged in Japan, and the 94% for the Sansei is similar to the 84% for the youth in America, especially when one considers that the Sansei in Portland are better educated than the American average,[8] With these as assumed anchor points, one may see the figures for the Kibei and other Nisei as strongly indicating the effacacy of socialization agencies other than the family and primary groups. The Issei have not passed on their values in this measure to their children or to their grand children. Even the Kibei, educated in Japan, have a figure above that of their generational cohorts in Japan (41% to 34%). The extent of the cultural movement may be observed in the relatively small difference age makes among the Japanese (a 17 point spread, 42% - 25%) and among the other Americans (a 25 point spread, 84% - 60%) but in the very great difference age makes among the Japanese Americans (a 61 point spread, 94% - 33%).

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[8] It is beyond the scope of the available data or of this paper to indicate what socialization factors might be overwhelming the effect of the family and primary groups, but there is much general discussion indicating that education is the major factor. As Almond and Verba report, "Among the demographic variables usually investigated -- sex, place of residence, occupation, income, age, and so on -- none compares with the educational variable in the extent to which it seems to determine political attitude. Civic Culture, p. 379.

TABLE IV

DEMOCRATIC RESPONSES: JAPANESE AMERICAN SURVEY[a] AND PROTHRO-GRIGG SURVEY[b]
(in percent)

	Japanese Americans						
	Issei Non Cit.	Issei Citizens	Kibei	Nisei	Sansei	Total	Prothro-Grigg Survey
Majority Rule							
Disagree that only informed should vote	8.3	24.1	47.1	54.1	45.9	43.7	49.0
Disagree that only taxpayers should vote	33.3	44.8	50.0	51.0	37.8	43.7	21.0
Disagree to bar Negroes from office	93.3	93.5	87.5	99.0	100.0	95.6	80.6
Disagree to bar Communists from office	46.1	29.0	38.9	48.0	48.6	46.6	46.3
Agree to AMA right to vote as a bloc	41.7	50.0	50.0	46.3	43.2	41.4	45.0
Averages:	(44.5)	(48.3)	(54.7)	(59.7)	(55.1)	(54.3)	(48.4)
Minority Rights							
Agree to allow anti-religious speech	20.0	40.6	50.0	87.9	94.6	73.0	63.0
Agree to allow socialist speech	100.0	76.7	85.7	87.8	91.9	82.0	79.4
Agree to allow communist speech	50.0	29.0	50.0	69.7	83.8	61.6	44.0
Disagree to bar Negro candidacy	86.7	87.5	88.2	93.8	100.0	91.3	75.5
Disagree to bar communist candidacy	35.7	25.0	35.3	42.4	58.3	42.7	41.7
Averages:	(58.5)	(51.8)	(61.8)	(76.3)	(85.7)	(70.1)	(60.7)
N:	15	32	18	58	37	212	244

[a] Bunch, Portland Survey of Japanese Americans.

[b] J. Prothro and C. Grigg, "Fundamental Principles of Democracy: Bases of Agreement and Disagreement," Journal of Politics, XXII (1960), pp. 279-294.

Is there corroboration evidence for the conclusions just stated? As to the pattern of generational change among Japanese Americans, Table IV clearly consolidates the picture of gradual development toward the modal American distribution of attitudes on democratic values. In reading the table, one should keep in mind that while the original results of the Prothro-Grigg study may be considered a bit high because the survey, taken in two university towns, measured respondents with educations higher than the average, the Japanese population in the second and third generation is even better educated. In the Pacific Northwest, Japanese are the most well educated of any racial group including white Anglo-Saxons.[9]

The figures for the three generational groups read:

Majority Rule		Minority Rights	
Sansei	55.1%	Sansei	85.7% (37)
Nisei	58.9% (116)	Nisei	74.1% (116)
Issei	47.1%	Issei	53.9% (47)

Ignoring the dichotomy between Majority Rights and Minority Rights, the percents of democratic response in Table II are:

Sansei	70.4%
Nisei	66.5%
Issei	50.5%
All J-A's	62.2%
U.S.	54.6%

[9] Calvin Schmid and Wayne McVey, Growth and Distribution of Minority Races in Seattle, Washington, Seattle Public Schools, 1964.

2. Leaders and Followers: One may also ask about commitment to other precepts of democracy such as that of government by the people and responsive to the people. The National Character surveys in Japan inquired about agreement to this question: "Some people say that if we get good political leaders, the best way to improve the country is for the people to leave everything up to them, rather than for the people to discuss things among themselves." The results are compared below with the Portland Survey and Civic Culture responses to this statement: "A few strong leaders would do more for this country than all the laws and talk."[10] (No generational distribution for the United States data is available). The pattern asserted above seems further confirmed by these data:

TABLE V: DEMOCRATIC RESPONSES TO LEAVING GOVERNMENT UP TO STRONG LEADERS (In %)

Generations:	Japanese[a]	Japanese Americans[b]	Americans[c]
Young	61	68	
Middle	53	49	
Old	38	28	
Average	51	49	52
N=	3,033	211	970

[a] Ike, op. cit., p. 1198. The democratic response is considered to be disagreement with this statement; "Some people say that if we get good political leaders, the best way to improve the country is for the people to leave everything up to them, rather than for the people to discuss things among themselves."

[b] Bunch, Portland Survey of Japanese Americans. The democratic response is considered to be disagreement that, "A few strong leaders would do more for this country than all the laws and talk."

[c] Almond and Verba, The Civic Culture, Codebook marginals, Deck III, CC 7. Measure is similar to that used in the Portland Survey.

[10] McClosky found a similar percentage, 56.2%, of a sample of the American general electorate (N=1484) felt that "it would always be necessary to have a few strong, able people actually running everything." Herbert McClosky, "Consensus and Ideology in American Politics," APSR (1964), pp. 361-382.

Being American is defined here in terms of agreement to the precepts of majority rule and minority rights as expressed in specific alternatives and "real life" options. Example: The precept of Free Speech is expressed as an option to allow an atheist to "make a speech in this city against churches and religions." Under such a definition, all the data here point to the conclusion that the younger Japanese Americans are more American than their parents, and in fact, more American than non-Japanese Americans! Among many plausible explanations of these data, one of the following may be operating:

1. Japanese American children reject much of the attitudinal content of their parents orientations and latch on to the values of the American democratic ideology propounded by schools, political parties and other general agencies of socialization; i.e., the family is not able effectively to determine children's values when those values are inconsistent with those of the larger society, or

2. Japanese immigrants who may, during the pre-war period, have expected to return to their native culture have, since the war, been resigned to staying in America, have tended to be more receptive of American values, and have encouraged and reinforced the acceptance of those values by their children and grand children, or

3. Neither of the above. The measures of democratic values used in this study may be of such a subtle nature that they are not amenable to being passed from an English-speaking culture to Japanese-speaking Issei or of being influenced in English-speaking children by Japanese-speaking Issei. The data indicate the tremendous effacacy of the socialization process but are unable to indicate anything conclusive about the relative strengths of primary as opposed to secondary agents of socialization.

4. None of the above. The data may simply represent a superficial attachment to symbolic socially-endorsed ego-aggrandizing "conversation pieces" by relatively non-political intellectually aware respondents. A deep committment to democratic precepts may not exist even among those who profess a concern for such rights. One study indicates that almost two-thirds (62%) of respondents rated as high in human rights consciousness agreed that many people should keep silent and tolerate infringement of such rights.[11]

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[11] Nobuyoshi Ashibe, "Conciousness of Human Rights and Problems of Equality," trans. by Hiroshi Itoh, ed., Japanese Politics - An Inside View, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, c1973), p. 145.

Conclusions

The comment that Professor Nobutaka Ike made on studying value changes in Japan may be just as appropriately applied to studying the responses of the three groups observed here; he said that the view is not as neat and tidy a one as might be perceived by another observer of a different society:[12]

> I can only speculate about why this should be the case. More cross-currents may be operating in Japan because of the juxtaposition of tradition and modernity in Japanese society and culture. The greater complexity may also be an artifact of the kind of date available to the political analyst.

In this study, also, the view is not of a neat and tidy set of realtionships. Definitive answers to the questions raised in this study will come, if at all, from the efforts of many more political scientists asking many and differing types of questions over a considerable time. Longitudinal studies and cohort analysis, as Ike found, are indispensable in studies of generational differences.

The data here confirm generational attitude differences, indicate a possibly higher level of comprehension of and verbal committment to some democratic precepts by Americans compared to Japanese and by young Japanese-Americans compared to old Japanese-Americans. This study suggests some plausible implications for the political socialization process in these relationships but does not make any strong assertion about the paramount effect of any one set of instutitions in that process.

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[12] Ike, op. cit., p. 1200.